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Review:

Donatella Failla, ed., *Lacche Giapponesi nel Museo Chiossone: manuale di analisi e descrizione catalografica*, Genoa: Sagep Editrice, 1993. (Regione Liguria. Ufficio Musei e Beni Culturali). In: *Knowledge Organization* (formerly *International Classification*), Frankfurt, vol. 21, no. 2, 1994.

The lacqueur section of Edoardo Chiossone's collection of Japanese art, now in Genoa, includes approximately 100 pieces of home furniture, a few dozen liturgical and military pieces and 352 individual pieces (*saya nuri*). These range from the Tokugawa or Edo period (1603-1868) to the first thirty years of the Meiji period (1868-1912). Dr. Failla's catalogue begins with a chapter on sources for her method based on an extensive bibliography (pp. 193-197) and a second chapter on problems of distinguishing between simple, composite and aggregate objects. Chapter three describes the characteristics of lacquered Japanese furniture. This is richly illustrated by photographs, period woodcuts showing the objects in context and attractive line drawings by the author. Chapter four examines materials and techniques in the art of lacqueur making. A final chapter documents analytical procedures in the structuring of the data. A series of appendices (A-G) illustrate the forms used to record material, Japanese and Chinese historical epochs (I-J), and examples of actual records (K). As the reviewer does not read Japanese no comments can be made on the accuracy of the translations. However, it can be noted that the rest of the work gives meticulous attention to detail.

From the viewpoint of classification this book is of particular interest for two micro-thesauri which take as their model J. Aitchinson and A. Gilchrist's *Thesaurus Construction*. The first thesaurus (52-87) deals with Japanese home furnishings, is in faceted form, and arranged alpha-numerically as in figure 1 below:

A	DOGU	Category
4.	GEINO-DOGU	Class
c.	KO-AWASE	Subclass
C	UTENSILS*	Generic Type
a	KODOGU	Model Type
2	KOWARI-DOGU	Sub-Type
f.	KOWARI-DAI	Variation

Fig. 1 An example of faceted alphanumeric classification applied to home furnishing from Failla, p. 46

A	Art of Lacqueur*	Family of technique
7.	MAKIE	Genus of technique
A.	JI-MAKI	Group of Species
d	CHIRI-JI	Species of Technique
1	NASHIJI	Subspecies of Technique
g.	KUMO-NASHIJI	Variety of Technique

Fig. 2 An example of faceted alpha-numeric classification applied to lacqueur techniques from Failla, p. 126

A second thesaurus covers materials and techniques in the art of lacqueur (137-146), and arranged alpha-numerically as in figure 2. The thesauri give a transcription of the Japanese term, followed by a translation of the term into Italian and English. Appendices correlate these transcriptions with the original Japanese ideogram. There are also short but very useful controlled vocabularies of a) structural features and specific aspects of morphology (96) illustrated by examples (97) and b) ornamental structural “complements” (98-99).

A series of beautiful colour plates (tables XXII-XXIX) illustrate the intricacies of the lacqueur methods. The author makes the facinating point (10) that *kanji* is made up solely of composite words (*jukoge*), whereby one term presents a determinate theme giving the fundamental meaning, preceded by an another term which deals with the particular and differentiated characteristics. Hence, *kanji* permits a natural faceted structure which corresponds to both the graphic system and the syntactic principles. Museum experts will find numerous useful reflections concerning classification of parts relative to the containing object. The catalogue is beautifully printed and illustrates admirably how new electronic cataloguing techniques can complement the tools of traditional scholarship.

* In the interests of intelligibility the Italian terms of the examples have been translated into English.

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